

A Town Hall to your Neighborhood meeting was held by the Board of Selectmen on October 22, 2012, at 7:00 p.m., at the Avery School Cafeteria, 336 High Street, Dedham, Massachusetts. Present were:

Carmen Dellolacono
Michael L. Butler
Sarah E. MacDonald
James A. MacDonald

Also present were: Chief Michael D'Entremont, Chief William Spillane, Tassir Alaini, Laura Leventhal, Maryann Tricarico, Ken Cimeno, Joseph Flanagan, Jason Mammone, William G. Keegan, Nancy A. Baker, William Aiten, Rich McCarthy, Virginia LeClair, Cynthia O'Connell, Karen O'Connell, Mariellen Murphy, Robert Stanley, Robert Blaney, John Duffy, Richard Bremer, Kathy Cardinale, William Ralph, Donna Bowse and Erin Perron.

Mr. Dellolacono called the Neighborhood Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Dellolacono introduced William Keegan, Town Administrator. Mr. Keegan introduced the various Department Heads and gave some updates around the Town. Mr. Keegan commented that the project is coming along fine and highlighted points relative to the Dedham Square Project, especially the large planter issue—he informed all that the planters are too large and will be replaced.

Mr. Dellolacono opened up the discussion to the audience and asked if anyone had questions or concerns.

Barbara Gula, Curve Street, District #6 Representative—Ms. Gula had concerns with the traffic in Dedham Square and had some issues with the flashing light at Eastern Avenue and High Street and the removal of the Stop Sign. Ms. Gula also had some issues with the lights (no delay, no green arrow) at the intersection of Washington Street and High Street. Jason Mammone, Director of Engineering, informed her that the lights at Eastern Avenue and High Street will not be fully activated until the spring. Additionally, these lights have to be in sync with the lights at the intersection of Washington Street and High Street. Mr. Mammone informed her that the flashing light will remain because the Stop Sign has been removed. He went on to say that the existing markings will remain until the road is complete and re-striped in the spring. Mr. Mammone asked all to use common sense at this location for the next few months.

Ms. Gula asked Mr. Mammone if there will be a delay in the green light. Mr. Mammone responded that he will take a look over the winter. Ms. Gula asked if there were any thoughts relative to the green arrow. Mr. Mammone informed her that they could not add an arrow due to the affect it would have with the traffic in Dedham Square. Mr. Mammone went on to say that he will take a look over the winter.

On another matter, Ms. Gula informed all relative to a Dedham Times editorial – outlining the need for a Police Station, Town Hall and Senior Center and the intelligent approach of find a space to satisfy all three of these needs. Mr. Keegan informed Ms. Gula of a recent RFP sent out through BPCC requested space for these types of needs—he went on to say that the RFP produced no responses. Relative to the acquiring the Ames Schoolhouse Building, he explained that there are many businesses in the building and it would be a challenge for the owner to relocate all of these businesses. Mr. Keegan went on to say that the Ames Schoolhouse is not a new idea; however, it has many challenges. As a member of the BPCC, Mr. Dellolacono explained the RFP further and the desire to combine numerous buildings into one large space. Mr. Dellolacono informed all that nobody came forward with anything. He went on to say that there was one person with a suitable building; however, this person/owner of building did not respond and did not work with the Town.

Joe Findlen, Central Avenue, District #4 Representative, asked Mr. Dellolacono if there was some other place in Dedham that could accommodate 60,000 sq. ft. of space. Mr. Dellolacono informed him that there were no takers. Mr. Dellolacono went on to say that the BPCC is moving forward with the Police Station to be located at the parking lot on High Street across from St. Mary's Church.

Marie Ferro, resident—Informed the Board and staff that the lines on High Street are faded and would like them to be re-striped. Additionally, Ms. Ferro asked a question relative to the new building going up across from C & T Paints. Rich McCarthy, Town Planner informed Ms. Ferro that the Planning Board approved the plans for 321 Washington Street. He went on to say that the owner agreed to a No- Left Turn restriction and there are new restrictions relative to the commercial aspects, i.e., no restaurants, fitness centers. Mr. McCarthy informed all that the owner will make lease residents aware that they have to take a right at this location. Mr. McCarthy went on to say that this location is a tough spot and he does not want to see traffic congestion. Mr. McCarthy informed all that the owner has taken care and time to mimic architectural signature building coming into the center. Additionally, the owner is working well with the neighbors—he went on to explain the project further.

Susan Fay, District #4 Representative, thanked whoever saved the trees in front of the Registry of Deeds, High Street. She went on to ask if the Police Chiefs' Association has taken a position on the medical Marijuana Referendum Question. Chief Michael D'Entremont informed all that if the question is approved, there will be 35 dispensaries. Additionally, other parts of the country who have approved the marijuana statute have seen an increase in crime—there are a lot of issues and it contradicts Federal Laws. Therefore, if approved, the state will allow and federal will prohibit. Chief D'Entremont informed all that it is his believes that there will be a whole host of issues relative to public safety.

Ms. Fay informed all that approximately 70% of the people in Massachusetts support the Referendum Question. Ms. Fay asked if she could get some feedback relative to where the Police stand on this question so that she can place a story in the newspaper. Chief D'Entremont informed her that public safety wise, it is unfavorable. Mr. Butler added—Some towns are changing their by-laws to prevent dispensaries.

Diane Nickerson, Precinct #4 Representative—Asked the status & process relative to the Senior Center and also the status of the District Attorney's Offices moving back to Dedham.

Mr. Dellolacono informed all that District Attorney Michael Morrissey attended a recent Board of Selectmen's Meeting to discuss his plans and desire to move back to Dedham. Mr. Keegan added—it is a challenge to find him a public parcel large enough to accommodate his offices. Mr. Keegan informed all that the District Attorney was kept in mind when the Building RFP went out. The Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator will continue to work with the District Attorney.

Relative to the Senior Center, Mr. Keegan informed all that their will further discussion and debate at the Special Town Meeting in November—there is an article on the warrant to form another committee to find a suitable site.

Bob Snider, resident Precinct #6, asked if the Town ever consider taking the Gobbi Land on East Street. He went on to say that it is a nice parcel of land, although Mr. Gobbi has degraded the property. Mr. Snider commented that the parcel is close to East Street and could possibly be a nice location for a Senior Center and some Athletic Fields. He went on to say that moving a field to the East Street location would free up Gonzales Field for the Police Station. Mr. Snider commented on the blight of the neighborhood due to the terrible condition of the Gobbi property and how placing the Senior Center and field on the property would serve multi-purposes.

Mr. MacDonald informed Mr. Snider that any idea is worth exploring. He went on to say that since he has been on the Board of Selectmen, the only parcel ever taken was Wilson Mountain—it was a long process with many years of litigation. He asked all to consider taking a long hard long before taking someone's land, especially the legal cost involved. Mr. MacDonald informed all that Mr. Gobbi owns a lot of property in the Town and can look into it. He explained—plan a number of years for something like this to happen and also consider costs.

Mr. MacDonald informed all that at the next Board of Selectmen's Meeting, the Board will speak about taxes and speak about the Mitigation Stabilization Fund for Debt Services. Mr. Butler added that as of July 1, 2010, the Town as collected approximately 1.2 million dollars per year from the Meals/Hotel taxes. Currently, there is approximately 3 million dollars in the account. Mr. Butler went on to discuss the fund and commented that the Town has just been depositing the money and has not taken anything out.

Joe Findlen, Central Avenue, Precinct #4 Representative—Asked the status of the Rustcraft Road Sidewalks. Mr. Dellolacono commented that this location is one of the most dangerous streets in Town. Joe Flanagan, DPW Director, informed him that some of the street lights have been replaced to brighten up the area. He went on to say that the sidewalks are listed on the Capital Budget over the next 5 or 6 years—at this point in time, there are no funds to do the project. Mr. Flanagan informed all that the DPW will trim back some of the trees to make it a little wider. Mr. Keegan commented that the MBTA owns a good strip of land to locate a sidewalk and will work with the Town relative to their land. Mr.

Keegan went on to say that a few years back, they had an approved grant from the state to assist with this project; however, the State budget had problems and they lost the funding for this project. Mr. Keegan explained that he is looking at ways that the Town might be able to fund this project.

Barbara Gula, Curve Street, Precinct #3—Commented that there is currently some vacant space on Rustcraft Road—she asked if the Town has considered this space. Mr. Keegan commented that this is a great location and the building looks a lot like a Town Hall. He went on to say that he has spoken with the owner and he is not interested—the owner has some kind of development in mind down the road.

Marie Ferro, resident, District #3, asked Erin Perron, Endicott Estate Manager, if she had any ideas on what the Endicott Estate can bring in going forward. Ms. Perron informed her that people have shown interest from the estate's website; however, the website is in need of an update. She is working on some new publishing and has a Bridal Show and Flower Show planned very soon at the estate.

Ms. Ferro expressed her concerns that the community groups will be pushed out. Ms. Perron assured her that she will be working with the community groups.

Diane Deria, Riverdale resident, had issues with Joseph's Bus Line, the vendor who provides the local bus service. Mr. Keegan asked her to explain the complaint. Ms. Deria informed all that the bus drivers are unreliable and take liberties with the schedule and route. Ms. Deria commented that she takes the local bus to O'Neill Drive a few days a week. She went on to say that there are residents at O'Neill Drive who have complaints about the bus, too. Mr. Keegan commented that this is the first time he has heard these complaints—Mr. Keegan asked if he could speak to her about the issues at the conclusion of the meeting so that he can obtain more information.

Rob Blaney, Youth Commission Director, spoke to the audience about the kids of Dedham and his programs. He informed all that the Town has been designated one of the top 100 best communities for young people.

Susan Fay, resident, asked the group if the neighbors are ok with the placement of the new Police Station on High Street. Mr. Dellolacono informed all that have been numerous meetings with the neighbors to answer questions and at the end of the meeting, the majority of the neighbors wanted to get involved—the BPCC is working on the project along with the neighbors. Mr. Dellolacono went on to say that all are not happy; however, everyone will have a say.

Mary Kehoe, resident, Precinct #1—Asked what the position is of the BPCC relative to the old Police Station in Dedham Square. Mr. Dellolacono informed her that the old Police Station will follow the same new use process as the old Avery School. Mr. MacDonald reminded all that the Town does not own the land where the old Police Station is located. Mr. Keegan went on to say that the Town owns the building and St. Paul's Parish owns the land.

Barbara Gula, Precinct #3 Representative, asked the status of the Arts Center at the old Avery School. Mr. Keegan informed all that an RFP went out this summer for re-use. He went on to say that there was one response—The Motherbrook Arts Group, who met the minimum response. Mr. Keegan informed all that he has presented it to the Board of Selectmen and he is in negotiations for price.

Tom Polito, Precinct #4 Representative—asked the rent for the Avery School. Mr. Keegan informed all that there is no set amount—he is presently in negotiations for rent. Mr. Butler added that the lease will maintain the building at no cost to the Town for maintenance and expenses—this was the intent of the RFP.

Ms. MacDonald reminded all that along with Michael Humphrey and Rob Blaney, they will be coordinating the Toys for Tots Function to be held at the Dedham American Legion on December 9, 2012—toys and gift cards for the older kids will be collected at the Legion and everything collected will go to the children of the Town of Dedham.

Mr. Dellolacono commented that the Town has great Department Heads and staffs who are accessible to the residents and visitors.

Mr. Keegan wished all a very Happy Holiday Season and reminded all to get out and vote on November 6, 2012.

The Neighborhood Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

The Department Heads and staff stayed longer to answer further questions from the audience.

This is to certify that the above is a true and accurate record of the Minutes of the Board of Selectmen's Neighborhood Meeting held on October 22, 2012, which Minutes were approved on November 15, 2012.

Carmen Dellolacono, Chairman